

Teenagers & Sexual Violence

Who Experiences Teen Sexual Violence?

Rates of sexual violence against youth aged 12-18 are very high,¹ and the survivor normally knows the person who committed the offense.² Nationally, about 8% or 10 million girls and 0.7% or 791,000 boys under the age of 18 have experienced either rape or attempted rape.² Experiencing sexual violence as a child or teen makes it more likely the survivor will experience re-victimization in adulthood.² One in three (30.1%) victims of completed rape experienced their first rape between ages 11-17.³

It is difficult to determine the full impact of sexual violence against teenagers since most research focuses on children or college-aged youth. There are many gaps in research on sexual violence against teens, especially those from marginalized, unserved, and underserved communities.

Throughout this document we will alternate between using teen, youth, and young people to reflect the variety of ways people identify.



1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys have been sexually abused before the age of 18.⁴

Who Commits Sexual Violence Against Teens?

Youth who experience sexual violence are more likely to be victimized by a peer or someone they know.²



10.1% of girls were victimized by a stranger.



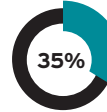
43.6% of girls were victimized by an acquaintance.



27.7% of girls were victimized by a family member.



28.8% of girls were victimized by a current or former intimate partner.

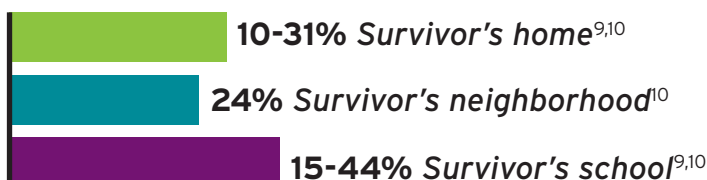


Over 35% of boys were made to victimize someone else (completed or attempted) by an acquaintance.

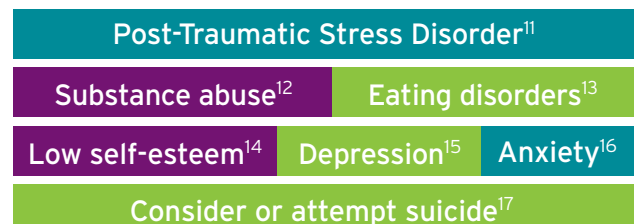
Effects of Sexual Violence

Young people who experience sexual violence may experience: Poor academic performance,⁵ Sexual risk taking behavior,⁶ Pregnancy,⁷ and Self-harm.⁸

Sexual assaults against youth happen in familiar places.



Teens who experience sexual violence may suffer from mental health conditions:



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Sexual Violence and Students

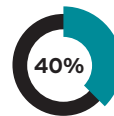
According to the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 6.7% of high school students reported they were physically forced to have sexual intercourse. This includes:¹⁸



A study on sexual harassment of 7-12 grade students found:¹⁹



56% of girls have experienced any kind of sexual harassment.



40% of boys have experienced any kind of sexual harassment.

Experiencing any kind of Sexual Harassment



48% of all Students

Experiencing Sexual Harassment in Person

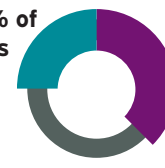
35% of Boys



52% of Girls

Experiencing Sexual Harassment Online

24% of Boys



36% of Girls

Sexual Violence in Detention Facilities

A Bureau of Justice Statistics report found that in a nationally survey of juvenile facilities and state contract facilities that:²⁰



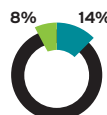
Almost 1 in 10 youth were sexually abused in the past year.



Over 90% of youth who reported staff sexual misconduct were victimized by a female facility staff.



Most youth were abused by a staff member and over 85% were assaulted multiple times.



Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth experience higher rates of sexual violence (14.3%) compared to heterosexual youth (8.9%).

In 2011-12 4.7% of youth age 16-17 who were held in adult prisons and jails reported sexual victimization. This rate is similar to those of adult inmates.²¹

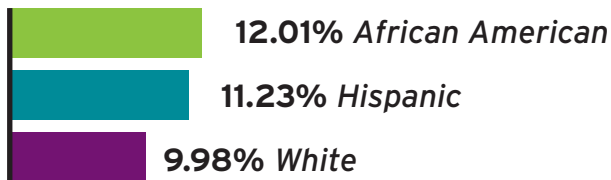
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Oppression and Sexual Violence Against Teens

Sexual violence does not happen in isolation. Oppression (racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, etc) is one of the root causes of sexual violence.²² Youth of color, homeless youth, and LGBTQ youth are more likely to experience sexual violence.

Race and Sexual Violence

African American and Hispanic girls are more likely to experience sexual violence than white girls.²³

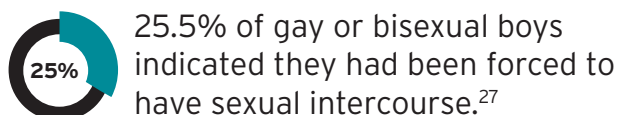
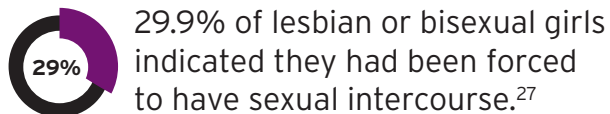


LGBTQ and Sexual Violence

LGBT youth are more than three times as likely to engage in survival sex or exchange sex for food, money, shelter, drugs, or clothing.²⁶

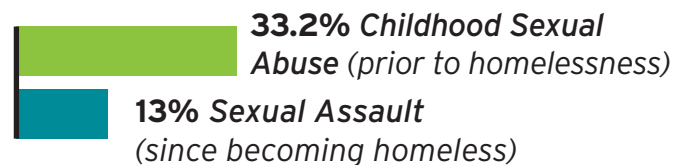


LGBTQ youth are more likely to experience sexual harassment than heterosexual youth. In one study 81% of transgender youth experienced sexual harassment.²⁸



Homelessness and Sexual Violence

Homeless or precariously housed youth reported experiencing childhood sexual abuse and sexual assault.²⁴

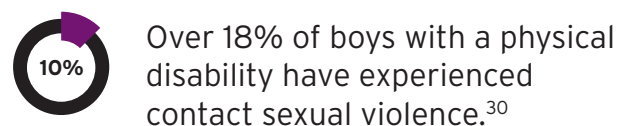
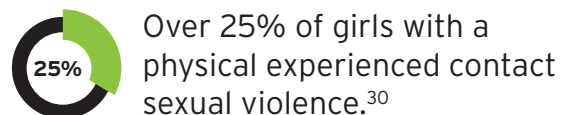


LGBTQ youth experience higher rates of sexual violence before becoming homeless.²⁵

Once homeless LGBTQ youth are victims of 7.4 more acts of sexual violence during their lifetime than their heterosexual homeless peers.²⁵

Disability and Sexual Violence

Youth with physical disabilities are more likely to experience sexual violence than youth without physical disabilities.²⁹



In one study over 22% of physically disabled youth experienced contact sexual violence - this is 1.74 times higher than able bodied youth. Over 40% of physically disabled youth experienced non-contact sexual violence.³⁰

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